




Brandon Carrell, MD (1911–1981)

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ABSTRACT

This biographical sketch on Dr. Brandon Carrell commemorates the life of an influential surgeon in the Dallas community. His contributions to pediatric orthopedic surgery helped form the field it is today.

KEYWORDS Adolescents; leadership; orthopedics; pediatrics; remembrance

Dr. Brandon Carrell was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. He attended college at Washington and Lee University in Virginia and married Nancy in 1931. He then completed his medical degree at Northwestern Medical School, followed by postgraduate training at Johns Hopkins University. He completed an orthopedic residency program in Dallas that was the first to offer rotations at three major hospital centers: Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children (now Scottish Rite for Children [SRC]), Parkland Memorial Hospital, and Baylor University Hospital (now Baylor University Medical Center). Dr. Brandon Carrell practiced in Dallas after completing his degree, joining the Carrell Clinic in 1939. He was the oldest of three children born to Dr. William Beall (W. B.) Carrell and Beulah Carrell (*Figure 1*).^{1,2}

He and his father, W. B. Carrell, worked alongside one another at SRC. Dr. Brandon Carrell eventually succeeded his father in 1944 as chief of staff at SRC.¹ Since he volunteered his time at SRC, he continued his private practice until 1960; after that point, he devoted all his time to SRC (*Figure 2*).^{1,2} Dr. Carrell was the second chief surgeon for SRC. Those who knew him noted his extreme devotion to his patients (*Figure 3*). He was as dedicated to teaching medical trainees as he was to his patients and as a result has impacted the lives of thousands of children.

SRC has honored him with the annual Brandon Carrell Visiting Professorship, hosted by the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and SRC. The professorship began in 1978 to honor his contributions to pediatric orthopedics. The 1½-day course focuses on treatments,

innovations, and discussion of complex cases from SRC. Pediatric orthopedic surgeons and others with an interest in pediatric orthopedics are encouraged to attend. The course focuses on common pediatric orthopedic topics such as talipes equinovarus, pediatric hip dysplasia, and skeletal maturity assessment. A presymposium dedicated to topics in pediatric orthopedics for nurses, researchers, and allied health professionals typically precedes the Brandon Carrell Visiting Professorship. This 1-day course discusses best practices in a variety of common pediatric orthopedic conditions.^{3,4} Additionally, SRC's medical library is named "The Brandon Carrell, M.D., Medical Library" in his honor.

The Carrell-Krusen Symposium is a 3-day annual meeting that focuses on the treatment of neuromuscular disease as it relates to pediatric orthopedics. The invited visiting professors are internationally recognized in the field of neuromuscular disease. The symposium was founded by Dr. Jay Cook, pediatric neurology director at SRC from 1978 to 1989, who is renowned in the field of clinical and research pediatric orthopedics. Dr. Edward Krusen served the city of Dallas as the first clinical director of the Muscular Dystrophy Association and is also part of the namesake.^{5,6}

Dr. Carrell's compassion and commitment to patients was highlighted in a story by a former patient of his, Lyndon Olson. Olson described Dr. Brandon Carrell informing him that a possible treatment option would be amputation of a gangrenous leg. However, Olson expressed concern about not being able to play baseball. During this time, parents were unable to visit their children at SRC. Olson relied on and trusted Dr. Carrell, describing his time at SRC as "the

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Figure 1. Dr. Brandon Carrell alongside a young patient.



Figure 2. Dr. Brandon Carrell examining a pediatric patient at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children.

most loving, nurturing place in his life outside his family.” This was the first time he had to make a major decision, and he had the confidence to make the decision because of the trust and respect he had for Dr. Brandon Carrell. He ultimately chose to have his leg amputated. It is clear that the empowerment Dr. Brandon Carrell provided to Lyndon



Figure 3. Dr. Brandon Carrell reviewing radiographic images alongside one of his pediatric patients.

Olson as a young man allowed him to face his decision with courage and support.⁷

Dr. Carrell died in 1981 at the age of 71 and was survived by his wife, Nancy, and two children, Helen and Stewart.¹

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